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ABSTRACT

A class was developed for 10 musically talented students in an elementary school, to enable the students to increase their musical interest and knowledge and to improve their music performance skills. Strategies for providing a more challenging musical environment for these students included: a pull-out class, teaching of music theory and composition accompanied by student performances, and individual student projects involving reports on music topics or performances of compositions practiced independently. A posttest on the subject of music theory and composition showed that each of the 10 talented students showed an increase in music understanding over the pretest. A teacher-made performance checklist showed improvements in music performance skills, and a pre- and post-attitude survey also showed that students' enthusiasm for music had increased. Appendices include copies of the student interview form, music coordinator letter, parent questionnaire, pre- and post-test, student performance checklist, student attitude survey, weekly log, summation of student performance checklist, summation of weekly logs, results of student attitude survey, student evaluation form and final evaluation form. (Author/JDD)

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Increasing the Musically Talented Elementary School Student's Musical Skills and Knowledge

by

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

Increasing the Musically Talented Elementary School Student's Musical Skills and Knowledge

by

Elaine A. Meils

Cluster 25

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1988

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Approved:

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Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Increasing the Musically Talented Elementary School Student's Musical Skills and Knowledge. Meils, Elaine A., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Music / Music Education / Music Activities / Music Techniques / Talent Development / Gifted / Enrichment Activities / Elementary Education / Creative Development / Acceleration

This practicum addressed the problem of musically talented students not being challenged according to their abilities and knowlege in the regular music classroom.
The lack of challenge for these students was not allowing the students to improve their musical knowledge, their performance skills, or their overall interest in music. The writer developed a talented class within the elementary school's environment. The literature review did not provide the writer with evidence of this type of program in an elementary school setting. However, the literature did provide the writer with ample ideas in which to implement a class of this type.

The writer's first goal of the talented class was to increase the music knowledge of the students. The second goal was to increase the students' performance skills. The third goal was for the students to exhibit a greater enthusiasm for music. The solution strategies utilized in order to attain the goals were; the pull-out class for the musically talented students, the teaching of music theory and composition accompanied by student performance, and individual student projects.

The goals of the practicum were met. The musically talented class proved to be a success and an enjoyment for all of the students involved.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school in which the practicum took place is located in the fourth largest school system in the United States. Located in the southeast portion of the United States, the school system has a population of approximately 244,800 students. Forty-one percent of the student population is Hispanic, 33% is Black non-Hispanic, and 25.3% is White and other (including Asians and American Indians). The student population of the school system is constantly growing and many schools are overcrowded and depend upon the use of portable classrooms. Resident births have risen from 16,404 in 1978 to 23,254 in 1986.

The school system has an administrative staff of 1,040 which includes school officials, managers, supervisors of instruction, principals, and assistant principals. There are 14,571 teachers employed within the system and 21,804 other staff employees which include aides, clerical, service and skilled workers, and technicians.

Educational programs and services which are provided by the school system include: Chapter I program, State Compensatory Education program, Exceptional Student

Centers, Adult/Vocational Schools, Dropout Identification/Reduction programs, and community schools.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The school in which the practicum was conducted is located in a suburban, lower-middle class socioeconomic area. The student population as of October 2, 1987 was 666 students enrolled in grades K-6. The school is comprised of 69 kindergarteners, 87 first graders, 100 second graders, 102 third graders, 100 fourth graders, 101 fifth graders, and 107 sixth graders. The ethnic composition of the students is 79% Hispanic, 19% non-Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% Black. The teacher-pupil ratio is 24 students per teacher.

The majority of the homes surrounding the school were built between the years of 1950-1965 and currently sell for approximately $50,000-$75,000. Condominiums are beginning to appear in the neighborhood and are priced to sell from $40,000. Approximately 70% of the students come from broken homes, and of those, approximately 40% of the students are being raised by a single parent. The majority of the parents are blue collar workers. There are 111 students receiving free lunch and 67 students receiving reduced price lunch.

The school's 1987-88 long range plans include:

(a) improving instruction in order to achieve academic excellence, (b) improving test scores in basic skills, (c) improving school attendance, (d) improving the critical and creative thinking skills of students performing in the upper quartile of the Stanford Achievement Test, (e) training students on computers, (f) alleviating the over-crowded situation in the school by acquiring additional portable buildings, and (g) continuing the positive behavior management program at school and at home.

The administration consists of 1 principal and 1 assistant principal. The faculty is comprised of 22 classroom teachers, 11 special teachers, 2 teacher aides, 2 secretaries, 1 clerk, and 4 custodians. The ethnic composition of the teaching staff is 21 non-Hispanic teachers, 6 Hispanic teachers, and 6 Black non-Hispanic teachers. Of the 33 teachers, 30 have continuing contracts and 14 have earned a master's degree.

The writer of this practicum has been employed within the school for a period of 5 years. A dedicated clarinetist and pianist, she earned an undergraduate degree in music education and a master's degree in computer education.

The writer is employed as the music teacher within her work location and is responsible for teaching general music to students in grades 2 through 6. The producer of

school musicals, the writer has organized a choral group comprised of 70 students as well as a bell and recorder ensemble. Both groups of students meet after school hours to practice and frequently travel throughout the community to perform. The writer recently organized a Cultural Arts Day within her work setting to educate students on various forms of art such as music, dance, and visual and literary art. In addition to these activities, she has served on the faculty council, produced talent shows and was recently nominated as Teacher of the Year in her school.

Employed within the county for 5 years, the writer is an avid music advocate within her community and speaks to the county school board and government officials concerning music education issues. She has served as secretary to the county's music education association for the past 2 years. She is a member of the music association on the state and national level and has attended music education conferences throughout the nation. She recently completed a countywide project where she evaluated computer software and determined the software which will be utilized in music classes through the county.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The subject material in the general music class in the school is tailored for the student of average musical ability. The county music office has written objectives for every grade level to which the writer adheres. The objectives are well written and when incorporated into the daily lesson plan, the average child will have the opportunity to become a young musician. However, there were those students who have been high achievers in music class since grade 2. In music class, they constantly surpassed their classmates in terms of knowledge and ability. The writer often assigned these students to help the average students in class. The writer felt that several of the musical high achievers were musically talented students.

The musically talented students were members of the chorus and ensemble. Here again, both the chorus and ensemble are geared for average music students so that every student who exhibited interest in either group would have the opportunity to participate. The musically talented students often sang or played musical examples in the practice sessions because they usually learned the

material in the initial rehearsals. They were usually the students who were chosen for solos.

One of the major results of musically talented students attending music class, chorus, and ensemble with average music students was the lack of advanced musical training they were receiving. The talented students possessed the ability to acquire additional musical knowledge and skills than they were currently receiving. Oftentimes, these students asked to borrow books and instruments so that they could read and practice new material.

Another result occurring when musically talented students attended music class, chorus, and ensemble with average music students was the lack of challenge they encountered. Musically talented students were not being offered the opportunity to experience music in a challenging environment. This lack of challenge often led to frustration in class. One example of their frustration occurred when they constantly wanted to answer questions in class; however, the instructor often needed to call upon students who were of lesser ability in order to ensure that those students understood the material. The musically talented students often correctly completed their written work in less than half the time of other students. The writer was concerned that the lack of

challenge in the music classroom would seriously affect the students' future participation and interest in music.

There is a public school designed specifically for musically talented students located approximately 10 miles from the writer's school. The students who are accepted on an audition basis must attend the school fulltime. In the past 2 years, the writer has recommended five students to attend the school. The five students were auditioned and identified as musically talented students and attended the school; however, three of the five students returned to the writer's school. Reasons for returning ranged from not liking the other students, not liking the school, and wanting to be with friends. Therefore, even though there is a school designed for musically talented students, it does not always prove to be the solution for children who are musically talented.

The county music office has not provided objectives or curriculum requirements for musically talented students in the regular school environment. If the students are unable to attend the talented center because of parental concerns or audition requirements or do not wish to attend the talented center, the musically talented students' needs are being ignored in the regular school environment.

The writer questionned other music colleagues in order to learn if they also felt their general music

classes were not providing growth opportunities for musically talented students. Many teachers felt that the musically talented school catered to the needs of the musically talented students and simply referred students to the school. If students did not wish to attend the school, the teachers felt that their commitment to music was not strong enough and that the junior high program will prove to be beneficial to the students. It is the writer's opinion that music educators are ignoring the issue of what to provide for musically talented students in their regular music classrooms. By junior high school, these students may not be at all interested in music as a result of their elementary school musical experience.

In addition to the above stated reason, many teachers felt that because they teach every child in the school, they focus their efforts on the average students. Their schedule is normally based on 10 classes per day and oftentimes they do not have time for chorus or ensemble groups. The teachers felt that addressing the needs of musically talented students is not a priority item when they do not have the time to incorporate performing groups for the majority of the students.

In conclusion, the problem addressed by this practicum was that the musically talented students were not increasing their knowledge and skills in their general

music classes. This lack of advanced musical training would exhibited itself in reduced interest and the lack of future participation in the subject.

Problem Documentation

In order to provide documentation of the problem stated in the previous section, the writer conducted a written questionnaire to 19 potential musically talented students. Nineteen questionnaires were distributed and 19 were returned to the writer. The questionnaire asked the students questions (see Appendix A) which enforced the writer's belief that musically talented students are capable of achieving more knowledge and skills in music class than they are currently receiving.

A series of questions in the questionnaire concerned the students' interest in music class. In response to the question "What are you learning in music class?" 9 of the 19 students indicated that they were not learning anything new in music class. Seventeen of the 19 students felt that they were capable of learning more than they were currently learning in music class. Ten of the students indicated that the songs which the class performed in music were easy to perform. However, only 7 of the students felt that they were ahead of their fellow classmates in music. Six of the students felt that they

were sometimes ahead of their classmates and 6 students felt that they were not ahead of their classmates.

The questionnaire provided concrete evidence of the writer's belief that musically talented students were not being challenged within the general music class. It also revealed that the students realized their needs were not being met in the music classroom. All of the 19 students questionned did not take private music lessons. Therefore, all of the musically talented students were depending upon the school music program as their sole means of music education.

The writer also interviewed the principal and assistant principal of the school in order to determine their opinions regarding the problem. The principal and assistant principal felt that the school's musically talented children were not being given the opportunities they needed within the school setting. They not only expressed this belief regarding the music program, but in the art program as well. They also expressed the concern that the families in the area do not have the means to support private music lessons. The families count on the school to provide their children with necessary training. The principal felt that many of the families in the area did not approve of sending their children to schools for the gifted or talented because they wanted the children to

be close to home. Therefore, the principal felt very strongly that the school must address the needs of talented students.

The principal and assistant principal were in the process of writing the 1987-88 annual school report at the time of the writer's interview with them. As a result of the interview, a new objective in the school report will be to address the needs of the artistically and musically talented students within the school.

The writer also interviewed the music coordinator within the south-central area of the county where the school is located. The music coordinator oversees the operation of all music programs within the south-central area of the county, including the talented center. He felt that the musically talented students need to be challenged in all schools, not only in the talented centers. In a letter (see Appendix B), he stated the reasons why all schools need to identify and provide special learning experiences for musically talented students.

The writer distributed a questionnaire (see Appendix C) to the parents of musically talented students' in order to determine whether or not they felt their children were being sufficiently challenged in music class. Nineteen questionnaires were distributed and 14 were returned to

the writer. A discussion of selected responses is presented in the following paragraph.

Twelve of the parents were aware of what their children were currently doing in music class. All of the parents stated that they felt their children were capable of learning more in music. Four parents stated that the reason their children were capable of learning more in music is because of the children's high degree of interest in music. Six of the parents stated that their children buy music books to study at home and 12 of the parents indicated that their children practice instruments at home. The instrument the majority of the children practiced at home was the soprano recorder, which is a music class instrument. None of the parents reported that their children take private music lessons. However, all of the parents stated that they believed their children would pursue music in junior high school.

It was also apparent that the musically talented students were not increasing their knowledge and skills through the use of classroom observation. Musically talented students often asked advanced questions which the writer would answer quickly so as to not lose the average students' attention. Quite often, musically talented students became discouraged when the writer did not have them answer questions as much as they would like to. They

did enjoy helping other students; however, eventually they became bored or frustrated with the task. Oftentimes, the child who was being helped did not cooperate with the musically talented student. The circumvention of not being given the opportunity for musical growth would possibly lead the student to develop an apathetic attitude toward the subject of music.

Causative Analysis

The problem of musically talented students not being provided the opportunity to increase their musical skills and knowledge had many causes. The most important cause was the lack of commitment on the part of the music teacher. Even though teachers were concerned about the problem, they had never taken the initiative or seemed to have the time to try to correct the problem. They seemed more concerned about the overall general music program for the majority of the students and felt they were neglecting musically talented students.

A second cause of the problem was the time demands faced during the music class period. The writer met with every class in the school for two, 30-minute sessions per week. There was much material to be covered in that amount of time in order to meet the required objectives in each grade level. As a result, the questions and ideas of

the musically talented students were usually not addressed. Teachers had no time during the 30-minute period to meet with those students individually or in a small group.

A third cause of the problem was the time demands faced by the teachers and students during the school week. If the teacher could possibly meet with the musically talented students during the course of the week outside of their general music class, they would miss another subject as a result.

A fourth cause of the problem was the county music curriculum. The curriculum and objectives did not take into consideration the needs of musically talented students in the music program in a regular school. Musically talented students were referred to a talented center which students did not always wish to attend.

In addition, the writer had noticed an increase of musically talented students within the school. In previous years, there was a minimal number of students who were musically talented. It was most evident in grade 6 this year that there were between 10 and 15 musically talented students.

A sixth cause of the problem was that there were currently few teaching methods and books available for musically talented students in the elementary school. All

books available to the students in the school system were geared toward the county's music objectives and the average student population. Materials which would suit the students' needs would have to be purchased.

The Related Literature

A review of the related literature disclosed several methods which could be beneficial in providing the opportunity for musically talented students to increase their musical knowledge and skills. The literature also stressed the importance of addressing the needs of musically talented students. Whitmore (1985) stated that like other exceptional children, talented children should be able to participate in educational programs in the least restrictive environment in order to optimize the students' educational and social growth in consonance with their ability to benefit. Whitmore suggested devising Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for talented students. The program should be a realistic assessment of the students' present level of performance and should present a resonable expectation of what they can learn over the course of the year. The IEP should also identify the appropriate evaluation strategies which will determine the students' progress which should include annual and

short term goals.

Ely (1977) suggested that musically talented students need to be provided with a music program of enrichment in the elementary school. The program should be to awaken and to nurture musical potential academically and creatively. The three groups of children who would benefit from this kind of music program would be intellectually gifted who either demonstrate talent or no talent in music and the musically talented children who may not score high on the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. Within the program, the students need to learn to transfer symbol reading skills to the medium of music, where pitch and sound duration are also represented by and are attached to visual symbols. Students should be encouraged to explore new dimensions of artistic expression, new instruments, new combinations of rhythm, music, art, dance, and drama. New ways of learning may include multimedia programming with individually determined pacing and should promote self-directed projects with such advanced equipment as synthesizers and computers. Ely promoted the idea that pupils should be free to challenge traditional concepts, including the notation system, and to experiment with new ways to produce, organize, and record sounds that express fresh and original ideas.

Wooddell (1984) expressed that educators need to provide a music program for musically talented students which is not different from that of other students, although it must be of greater depth and variety. Studies in general music for special students should include studies of music as a means of communication, musical forms and styles, and sound. The class should develop sensitive recognition of music in everyday experiences. Wooddell believes that teachers should always include experience in other humanities besides music. The music teacher must not only offer the differentiated curriculum to the students, but also needs to have a firm background and basis of judgment in how to handle, counsel, and care for them. Wooddell believed in the need to encourage the development of the musically talented student's capacity for love, empathy, awareness, and communication with fellow beings. These students will not only affect the future of music, but of society as a whole.

Eriksson (1984) stated that talented children need to be identified by their specific talents and creative thinking abilities. Programs need to be designed in order to meet the children's unique characteristics and needs. Eriksson believed that education should encourage the active "sculpturing" of experience; however, in practice, it usually inhibits creativity and demands conformity.

Eriksson believed that educators need to offer talented individuals the opportunity to develop knowledge through creative thinking. Children's potential for knowledge and creativity is limited only in terms of their confidence in their abilities and motivation. According to Eriksson, creative thinking may be seen from four perspectives: perception, affect, cognition, and behavior. The perceptual training goal is to increase observation, to heighten aesthetic sensitivity, and to increase imaginative use of visual, aural, tactile, and kinesthetic percepts. Affective training involves the heightening of emotional sensitivity in learning. The cognitive component is creative in terms of three types of thinking: adaptive (perceiving relationships); elaborative (improving basic ideas); and developmental (awareness, observation, and perception). Creative behavior includes searching for problems, considering many alternatives, original thinking, emotional awareness, and self-expression.

Kress (1985) reported on the "Vanguard Program" in the Houston Independent School District. The program which allowed gifted and talented students to expand their knowledge incorporated interest centers in the classroom with challenging activities, games, intricate puzzles, brain teasers, or other long-range projects which the

students worked on. Consequently, students did not have to sit and wait until the whole class was finished with an assignment. The goal of this program was to allow exceptional students to become independent learners. Kress also stressed the importance of the need to expose all students to the rich world outside of school. Field trips, individual mentorships or shadowing experiences, and exposure to community people who work with students individually or in groups is an important experience for gifted and talented children.

Taylor, Albo, Holland, and Brandt (1985) expressed the belief that the development of gifted and talented programs are the most important set of experimental attempts now happening to improve education in the nation. Gifted and talented programs generally provide new experiences and approaches and mind-stretching growth for students in their programs. Taylor et al. also stressed the great need to move toward teaching more of the whole brainpower and the whole person in order to hit the ultimate targets in careers and life. Students who have the highest overall potentials to become excellent in a given profession need to be identified and given relevant training early in their educational careers. Taylor et al. mentioned the importance of extra-curricular training experiences and accomplishments which subsequently later

proved to show noticeable predictive power of later adult performance, achievements, and accomplishments.

According to Brandt (1985), Benjamin Bloom stressed the importance in providing musical experiences for musically talented students. Bloom believed that in some types of learning people differ very little, but in others they differ greatly especially for the types of learning that require enormous time and motivation. One area in which Bloom felt there are great differences is in the subject of music. Under favorable learning conditions, one will find talented musicians devoting years of continuous learning to music and will reach a high level of excellence. However, in order for musically talented students to excel, Bloom stressed that parents and educators must motivate and support these children. He suggested that schools do not seem to have a great tolerance for talented children who are out of phase with other students in their learning process.

Shrum (1985) stated that programs need to be developed for gifted and talented students. The programs should develop skills beyond those developed in the regular classroom and content used to develop those skills should reflect the students' interests. Shrum mentioned that talented students need an acceleration program which will allow fast progress through required topics which

will save more time for in-depth study of topics that appeal to the students' interests. A pullout program where talented students from regular classrooms work with peers at their own level of ability and in areas of interest during part of the school week would greatly benefit talented students.

Gordon (1986) stressed that music aptitude does not continue to develop after a child is about 9 years old; it stabilizes. The level of aptitude the child acquires by age 9 remains ostensibly the same throughout life. As a result, the importance of quality in classroom formal music instruction particularly through the third grade, as it interacts with continued informal environmental influences, cannot be overstated. Gordon stated that most persons have average music aptitude and relatively few persons have an abundance of music aptitude. However, if the quality and quantity of informal influences and formal instruction in music for a society should increase through age 9, the average level of music aptitude would undoubtedly rise.

Karnes and Peddicord (1980) reported on an educational program designed to meet the needs of talented and gifted students at the elementary school level. The Creative Learning in a Unique Environment (CLUE) program provided differentiated educational experiences to meet

the needs of talented students not generally met in the regular classroom. The program involved the students both as a group and as individuals in learning experienes. The main objectives of the program were to aid students in acquiring skills that would allow for the maximum development of higher levels of thought; to aid students in developing an understanding of group interaction; and to aid students in developing techniques which would increase their ability to do independent research. The activities of the program allowed development of talented students' thinking, learning, and creative abilities. In order to achieve these activities, students were involved in interpreting and summarizing information, stimulating the imagination, decision making, problem solving, making discoveries, and developing logical thinking. Program evaluation included assessments involving the teacher, student self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. Students were trained in the process of critiquing each other. Students also participated in a written self-evaluation as well as a written evaluation of the program.

Kolloff and Feldhusen (1986) proposed that schools should provide special programs for students who possess the following talents: academic-intellectual, artistic-creative, and vocational. However, few schools venture into developing programs for all three of these types of

students. Kolloff et al. stated that seminars should be developed in a variety of areas for talented youth. Students could be grouped for a seminar according to their discipline, and consequently, would be provided the opportunity to meet with their peers for discussions of higher level concepts in an area of study, to carry on independent study and research, and to be guided by a teacher in scholarly and/or artistic endeavors. The seminar, which is developed around a central theme or concept, would allow students to practice the skills of leadership through small group work and through the activities associated with independent study and research. Several approaches to learning are particularly suited to the seminar format. The exploration or ideas and concepts involves the student in reflective, critical, and creative thinking. Students may also engage in independent study pursuing research in selected areas or topics of special interest. Students are given the opportunity to structure their own learning and to develop products which synthesize and communicate their findings.

Cox, Daniel, and Boston (1985) surveyed several school districts in the nation and learned that over 70% of the districts had a pull-out program which serve the able learners. The term "pull-out" describes a program that places gifted and talented students in a

heterogeneous classroom for most of their instruction and "pulls them out" to study with other bright students in special classes in a different setting for a portion of the school week. Time spent in pull-out classes ranges from less than an hour a week to a full day per week. There are many advantages to this type of program. The arrangement is easily installed. The program can be put in place in short order and proves to be highly visible and easily evaluated.

In conclusion, a review of the literature presented several methods used to develop talented students' knowledge and skills and addressed the necessity of providing meaningful education for talented youth. Numerous suggestions for the development of special programs which are specifically designed to meet the needs of musically talented children were found in the literature.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

There were three general goals for this practicum. The first goal was to provide the opportunity to allow musically talented students to increase their musical knowledge. The second goal was to allow musically talented students the opportunity to increase their performance skills. The third goal was to improve the musically talented students' enthusiasm for music.

Behavioral Expectations

The following behaviors were expected at the completion of the practicum:

1. Each musically talented student would exhibit an increase in music knowledge.

2. Each musically talented student would demonstrate an increase in performance skills.

3. Each musically talented student would exhibit a greater enthusiasm for music.

Standards of Performance

The following standards of performance were used to

measure behavioral expectations:

1. When presented with a pre and posttest in the subject of music theory and composition, each musically talented student will show an increase for the understanding of music theory and composition.

2. Each musically talented student will increase musical performance skills by becoming acquainted with and performing simplified musical works by famous composers. Success will be measured by teacher observations using checklists when successfully performing selected music literature.

3. Each musically talented student will demonstrate a more positive attitude for the subject of music. Success will be measured with a pre and postattitude survey.

Assessment Instruments

The following assessment instruments were used to measure the standards of performance:

1. The pre and post music test consisted of open-ended questions regarding the following concepts: key signatures, accidentals, dotted notes, music vocabulary, intervals, major scales, and composition (see Appendix D).

2. A performance checklist consisted of the following headings: note accuracy, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, and tempo. The instructor responded to each heading based on a

5-point scale indicating unacceptable, below average, average, above average, or outstanding (see Appendix E). An overall rating was also be given for each work performed.

3. The student attitude survey consisted of 10 written questions regarding the student's attitude toward the subject of music. The students responded to each question based on a 5-point scale indicating strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree (see Appendix F).

In order to allow the necessary provisions for unexpected occurrences, a weekly log (see Appendix G) was kept by the writer during the implementation of the practicum. The log included unexpected events, problems, successes, and failures which occurred during the week, as well as any teacher or student concerns. The log was reviewed by the writer upon the completion of each week.

Plans for Analyzing Results

The results of this practicum were analyzed and presented as follows:

1. The results of the pre and posttest were compared numerically for each musically talented student and are discussed in Chapter V. A table using a bar graph for each student is also presented to illustrate the results of the

test (see Table 2).

2. The results of each musically talented student's performance checklist is discussed in Chapter V. A final checklist for each student, which is a summation of the student's individual checklists, is also included in the report (see Appendix I).

3. The results of the pre and postattitude survey are discussed in Chapter V (see Appendix J). A teacher-made attitude scale was used to measure the mean scores of the pre and postattitude surveys.

Table I illustrates how the behavioral expectations, standards of performance, assessment instruments, and plans for analyzing the results interacted with one another.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Behavioral Expectations	Standards of Performance	Assessment Instruments	Plans for Analyzing Results
1. Each musically talented student will exhibit an increase in music knowledge.	1. ...show an increase for the understanding of music theory and composition...	1. Written test	1. Table
2. Each musically talented student will demonstrate an increase in performance skills.	2. ...becoming acquainted with and performing simplified musical works by famous composers...	2. Performance Checklist	2. Final Checklist
3. Each musically talented student will exhibit a greater enthusiasm for music.	3. ...demonstrate a more positive attitude...	3. Attitude Survey	3. Scale

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Providing growth opportunities for musically talented students in the school music programs is of vital importance. Talented children need to be offered the opportunity to develop their talents which could most affect the future, not only of music but of society as a whole. A review of the literature suggested a number of specific methods which music teachers could apply within their school settings in order to fulfill the needs of talented music students.

One possible solution to increase the knowledge and performance skills of musically talented students was through the activity of music composition. Music composition allows the student the opportunity to organize symbols to produce musical sounds on a variety of performance media.

Ely (1977) reported that musically talented children often enjoy putting into written form the melodies they compose, autoharp accompaniments, and embellishments designed for rhythm and tonal instruments. Their interest in composition is the best motivation for learning subject

matter such as identifying pitches and letter names on the staff, recognizing the scale to which the melody belongs, the function of flats and sharps, and the purpose of key signatures and note values.

Belland and Watson (1985) discussed an enrichment program designed for musically talented students. The theme of the program was "folk tales and folk life". The students retraced the steps of the composers of folk music and improvised and composed folk tunes of their own. The students invented new methods for playing instruments - including the floors, the walls, and themselves. The students determined what they felt was the difference between making noise and making music. Just as folk musicians used natural and immediate surroundings as thematic material in their music, the students attempted to portray scenes using their instruments. To achieve the concept of depicting a desert, a fair, or an ornamental garden, the students needed to think both independently and collectively to create a clear mental image of a particular environment.

The writer believed that the method of musical composition could be very advantageous to increase the knowledge of musically talented students as well as their performance skills. This method could be adapted as a fun activity which could have many advantages. The students

could perform their completed musical compositions on a variety of instruments throughout the school environment. A school music performance might consist of these students performing their musical compositions on stage for the entire school. They may even wish to incorporate a story or lyrics into their composition. Perhaps the major drawback of this method was that the students could easily become discouraged if the composition did not sound very good. If this occurred, the teacher would work with and help the student with the composition. The writer believed that this method was advantageous for musically talented students.

A second solution to increasing the knowledge and performance skills of musically talented students was the method of song writing. Skaught (1987) stated that songwriting will enforce creativity as well as teach basic music fundamentals to musically talented students. Songs could be written as a class project or as very personal songs of expression. Students could begin the activity of songwriting where no tune yet exists. The students could visualize the message, write the words, and then the music. Writing words in songwriting is similar to writing a story. Students need to begin with an opening sentence and then develop a plot. Student songs are publishable in several songbooks. Students could also use their songs as an

accompaniment to a video welcoming students to school, a commercial of a hypothetical product for a classroom video, or a song for the school talent show.

The writer believed that the method of songwriting would benefit musically talented students in their knowledge of musical composition, story writing skills, and creativity. The songs could also be used for performance purposes throughout the school. It could be a good group activity for a special holiday occasion, a school campaign, or integrated into their current classroom learning situation. The major drawback to the songwriting activity was that it would be a lengthly project. The writer would have been required to teach lyric writing and musical composition, both of which are time consuming. However, this would be a valid course of study for musically talented students.

Another possible solution which addressed the needs of musically talented students was the implementation of a pull-out music class especially designed for musically talented students. Shrum (1985) explained the pull-out program as a class where talented students work with peers at their own level of ability and in areas of their particular interests during part of the school week. Cox, Daniel, and Boston (1985) explained the pull-out program as an arrangement of "pulling students out" to study with

other bright youngsters in special classes.

The writer believed the pull-out program was a valid solution to the problem. Musically talented students could meet together for a music class which could meet their needs. Students could participate in interesting and challenging music activities.

In a pull-out program, a meaningful course of study must be carried out. According to Wooddell (1984), teachers cannot just concoct brain-teasing new projects that will soak up the talented students' intellectual energies. The unit plan which Wooddell suggested consists of the following three areas: learner objectives, major concepts, and general content areas. The learner objectives should be aimed at developing certain characteristics of the talented students in order to develop further potential. Wooddell suggested the example of the actual preparation of a lavish Renaissance feast where the student learns about the music, food, and ambiance of that period. The concept is the main idea which is to be learned. An example could be that as a result of the Renaissance feast and music, there would be a unique and satisfying aesthetic experience for the students. The general content area could be the outline of the subject matter to be covered which would include an introduction, developmental activities, and concluding

activities. Wooddell mentioned the example of creating a learning center based on an era of music with pictures, articles, and pamphlets.

The writer considered the areas of learner objectives, major concepts, and general content as valid solutions to the problem. Learner objectives could include music history units and advanced theory for general knowledge and performance skills. The concepts could include cause and effect learning. The content area could include music theory concepts, music history, composition, and performance. These solutions contained good ideas for the design of a pull-out music class for musically talented students. The major drawback of the components which Wooddell explained is that music teachers may look upon the task as too much extra work for such a small population. However, the writer believed the pull-out music program with a meaningful design could be advantageous for musically talented students.

A fourth possible solution dealt with addressing the needs of the musically talented student as a person. Content, activities, and materials need to be planned for the development of the whole-person - mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Oftentimes, talented students are neglected in terms of understanding, self-esteem, a sense of worth, accomplishment, independence,

love, and self-actualization. The higher the capability, the greater the problems of adjustment that may be encountered. Talented students may be victimized by both teachers and peers for their "crazy, way-out ideas". They may be considered a threat to the established order of the classroom.

Ringer (1970) explained the idea of creating a loving and encouraging environment in the talented music class in an attempt to understand each student who is involved and adjusting the curriculum to the students' interests and personalities. This concept is one that is often ignored amongst teachers. The writer believed this type of nurturing is needed by musically talented students. They are often a misunderstood group of individuals who do need encouragement and understanding.

A fifth possible solution to address the needs of musically talented students was to allow the students the opportunity for a self-study plan. Students could choose an area of musical study and pursue the project independently. Students would report to the writer on a weekly basis for evaluation, concerns, and questions.

Description of Selected Solution

The writer's solution to the problem of musically

talented students not increasing their knowledge and performance skills in the regular music class was based upon the various methods and strategies which have been described in preceeding sections of this paper. The solution consisted of methods and strategies which specifically met the needs of musically talented children in the writer's work setting.

The first solution method which the writer chose was the implementation of the pull-out program for musically talented students. Students attended music class with their regular class and also attended a special music class with other musically talented students in the school. The amount of time the students spent in the music class was dependent upon a discussion between the writer and the teachers of the students. In attending a special music class with other musically talented students, the students were able to experience new and advanced material which they did not experience in the regular music classroom.

The next solution method which the writer selected was the combination of two solutions previously mentioned in this paper. She taught musically talented students how to compose music by using the components of objectives, concepts, and general content areas. The writer felt this activity was a fun and motivating one for the students. In addition, it was believed that composition also helped to

develop their creativity, music knowledge, and performance skills.

The third solution involved incorporating the teaching of advanced theory to the students in order to increase their performance skills. They also needed to learn more about music theory in order to successfully compose. The writer taught the theory which was relevant to the piece of music the students were studying in the special music class. The music consisted of meaningful compositions, several of which were composed by famous composers. The students were encouraged to perform the music for the school population. This solution was chosen in order for the students to be exposed to famous composers' works, characteristics of a particular composer's music or an era of music history, and to increase the students' knowledge of music theory so that these works could be successfully performed.

The fourth solution involved an independent music project which was presented by each student during the last few weeks of the implementation of this practicum. The students, with instructor approval, presented a report on a music topic or performed a composition for the class which they researched or practiced on an independent basis. The writer chose this activity in order to allow the musically talented students the freedom to investigate and present a

musical idea which was of interest to the students. In addition, it provided the other students with knowledge they acquired from other students.

For a number of reasons, the writer chose the four combinations of teaching methods in order to meet the needs of musically talented students within her work setting. The first reason the methods were chosen was related to the students' needs. The students needed to be challenged in a musical environment in which they could learn according to their abilities. These combined methods would meet the needs of the students.

The second reason for combining the music teaching solution methods was to allow the students the opportunity for many different types of musical experiences. To focus on one or two new experiences in the course of a 12-week program would create an atmosphere of possible boredom. Creating the opportunity for many experiences would create an atmosphere of anticipation and excitement. Finally, using a combination of the solution methods would allow the students to incorporate many different types of performances for the class, the school population, or the parent-teacher association. The students would perform their own compositions or the compositions of famous composers, and they would also present their self-study projects to these groups. The opportunity to perform was

motivating for students. The writer believed the solution methods would satisfy the goals of this practicum, as well as increase the visibility of the musically talented students within the school.

Report of Action Taken

The solution implemented in this practicum involved 10 sixth grade students. All of the students were considered musically talented based upon the writer's classroom observations over a period of 5 years.

Upon gaining permission from the school administrator, the solution strategy began with an after school meeting in the music room with the students and their parents in attendance. The writer congratulated the students for exhibiting a high degree of musical talent throughout their elementary school years. She stated that as a result of their interest and dedication to music, there would be a class designed for them. She explained that they would learn more about music and be able to learn how to play new instruments in the class. Several activities were mentioned to the students including music composition, student performance, and student projects. The students and their parents were thrilled about the musically talented class. The writer, students, and parents agreed

that the most convenient time for the class to meet would be after school, one day per week for 1-1/2 hours.

The second component of the introductory meeting was to administer a teacher-made attitude survey (see Appendix F) to the students. The purpose of the survey was to measure the students' interest in music, their future committment to music, and their likes and dislikes in music class.

The final component of the introductory meeting was to administer a teacher-made pretest (see Appendix D) to the students. The purpose of this test was to measure the students musical knowledge preceeding the implementation of the musically talented class.

The initial phase of the talented class involved the pull-out program for musically talented students. After parental and student agreement to the musically talented class, 10 students began their advanced studies on a weekly basis for 1-1/2 hours after school in the music room. The students brought a folder, regular paper, music manuscript paper, writing utensils, and a musical instrument of their choice to each class session. Several students owned a Casio keyboard and wanted to learn how to play the instrument more proficiently. Other students performed on the bells and recorders, which were available in the music room. One student bought a new clarinet and brought it to

class.

The first phase of the musically talented class involved musical composition. Musical composition was taught to the musically talented students by teacher assistance and student experimentation. The students were initially asked to write a four-measure composition beginning on the note C and ending on the note C. As the students became more comfortable with musical composition, they composed 8 and 16-measure compositions in the keys of C, F, G, B, and D major. The writer gave the students certain guidelines such as the number of measures, the key, and the time signature. The students also learned how to compose "question" and "answer" type of songs where the first 8 measures sounded like a musical question and the last 8 measures sounded like a musical answer.

Musical compositions were completed during class and were also given as homework assignments. Students kept a notebook of their compositions. They were required to perform their musical compositions on the instrument of their choice. The best compositions were chosen by the writer for performance pieces in the fifth and sixth grade regular music classes.

The students seemed to view musical composition as a fun activity. They applauded for one another after each student's performance. Several students laughed at their

own compositions, and the group tried to make them feel more comfortable with words of encouragement. Initially, several students seemed apprehensive to perform their compositions. The group made the activity such a pleasant one that after a few sessions, everyone seemed to love performing their compositions for the group. Many of the students also enjoyed performing their compositions for their regular music class.

The writer verbally evaluated the students' compositions after viewing the manuscript and listening to the performance of the composition. The writer did attempt to include a written evaluation of the composition during one class meeting. However, the written evaluation proved to be too time consuming during the class session. The pre and posttest included composition and, as a result, the writer was able to evaluate the students' compositions on a pre and posttest basis.

The second phase of the musically talented class was the teaching of advanced theory. During each class, the students were taught a new musical concept. Each concept was incorporated into a piece of music which students performed on a musical instrument or vocallly. This procedure was implemented in order to increase the musical knowledge and performance skills of each student.

The following musical concepts were incorporated into

the class sessions: the scales and keys of C, D, F, G, and B, major; the dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note rhythm; advanced music vocabulary; vocal reading and performance in three part harmony; intervals; and accidentals. The concepts were taught by the writer and incorporated class participation. No student music books were utilized.

All learned concepts were incorporated into future class sessions. Scales were often used as a warm-up activity. Performance pieces included one or several of the concepts. The writer also required that several of the new concepts be incorporated into the students' musical compositions.

Students were often asked to perform pieces of music for the class. The music performed was composed by several famous composers. The final evaluation performance piece was the theme from "Brahms' First Symphony". The writer evaluated each student's performance using the student performance checklist (see Appendix E). The purpose of this checklist was to inform the students of their musical performance and enabled the writer to keep a log of the students' performances. Music ratings were given in several categories including note accuracy, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, tempo, and an overall rating of the piece. Students received an outstanding rating if the

piece of music was performed with no mistakes; if it was performed musically but there were one or two note or rhythm mistakes, an above average rating was given. Students who received an average rating made up to five note or rhythm mistakes. No student received a below average or poor rating throughout the class. The students' overall checklists determined their rating on the final checklist (see Appendix H). The students seemed to look forward to the checklist. Many of them asked for a copy of the checklist to put in their music notebook.

The third phase of the musically talented class revolved around individual student projects. Upon the writer's recommendation and encouragement, 8 of the 10 students researched a music topic of their choice and presented their projects to the other students during the class sessions. Two of the students did not complete their projects and, therefore, were unable to present them to the class. Project topics included the clarinet, the melody bells, Dixieland jazz, the Casio and the piano, performances on the instruments previously stated, recordings, information sheets produced on the computer by the students, and student-made illustrations.

This activity allowed the students to become familiar with a musical instrument or a topic they wished to further investigate. It prompted two students to acquire pianos

and one student to acquire a clarinet.

One project which was not planned was a group project in which the class agreed to participate. Every year all sixth-grade students in the county have an opportunity to audition for the countywide honors festival. Students may audition on the melody bells, pianicas, recorders, or vocally in three part harmony. Each musically talented student who auditioned received a numerical rating by the auditioner; and, if the numerical rating was a high one, the student would be chosen to participate in the countywide honors festival concert. The writer explained the honors festival to the students and suggested that the music could be learned in the talented class. Nine students unanimously agreed to vocally audition for the honors festival. Despite encouragement from the writer and the other class members, one student did not feel comfortable participating in the audition.

During a part of four class sessions, the students learned the vocal audition piece, "Down Low In The Valley" by Johannes Brahms, which had to be sung in three-part harmony. The one student who chose not to audition worked on her student project during this time. Several of the new music concepts which the students learned in the talented class appeared in the vocal music audition selection. The writer concentrated on teaching the

individual parts to the students for the first two sessions. The students were then able to sing their parts independently when singing in three part harmony. The students were very excited about their audition and all nine students successfully auditioned fo the honors festival by trying their very best.

The musically talented class prompted the use of several forms. A weekly log (see Appendix G) was kept by the writer. The purpose of the log was to summarize the week's activities, the success of the activities, unexpected happenings, student concerns, and teacher concerns. (A summation of the weekly logs appears in Appendix I.)

The final phase of the musically talented class involved evaluation. For the first evaluation, the initial pretest was re-administered to the students (see Appendix D).

The second evaluation activity, the student attitude survey (see Appendix F) was re-administered to the students. The results appear in Appendix J. The students' performance ratings were totaled and the results appear in the final checklists (see Appendix H).

At the end of each month, the students evaluated their class performance using the student evaluation form (see Appendix K). This form allowed the students to evaluate

themselves musically and it also allowed them the opportunity to evaluate the class.

The final activity was the student evaluation form (see Appendix L) in which the students rated the talented class and its activities.

CHAPTER V

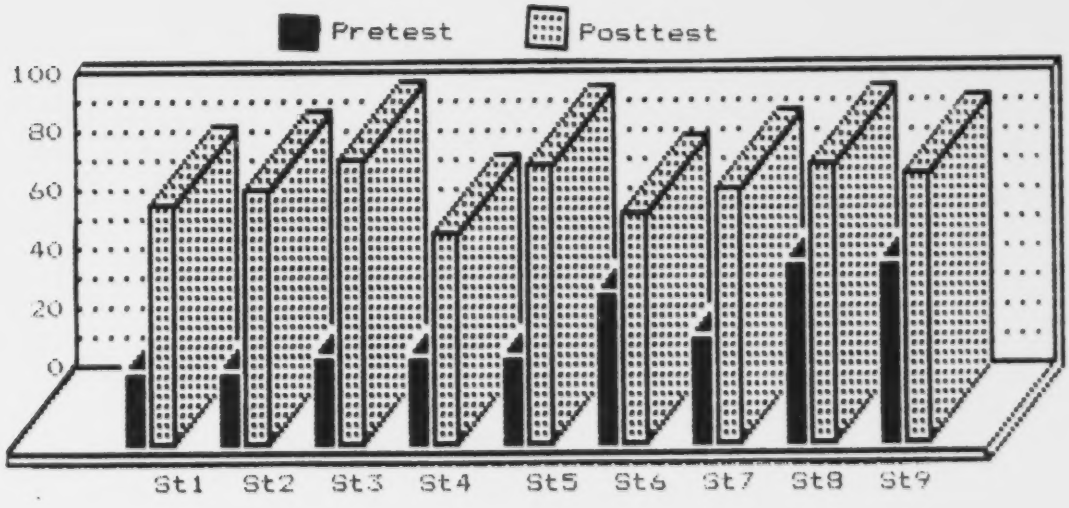
RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The first objective, "When presented with a pre and posttest in the subject of music theory and composition, each musically talented student will show an increase in the understanding of music theory and composition," was successfully met by all 10 of the students who participated in the musically talented class. This was measured by a teacher-made pre-posttest activity. The mean pre-implementation test score was 40% out of a possible score of 100%. The mean postimplementation score was 87% out of a possible score of 100%. A bar graph showed each student's pre and posttest scores is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Bar graph of students' pre and posttest scores



The second objective, "Each musically talented student will increase musical skills by becoming acquainted with and performing simplified musical works by famous composers, as measured by teacher observations using checklists when successfully performing selected music literature," was met by all 10 of the students who participated in the musically talented class. This objective was measured by a teacher-made performance checklist. The checklist was devised to inform students of how they were performing in the categories of note accuracy, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, and tempo. The writer rated each category based on a scale from 1 to 5 ranging from unacceptable to outstanding (see Appendix E). The final checklists, which are a summation of the students' overall checklists, appear in Appendix J.

Though not a stated objective, as a result of an unanticipated musical opportunity, nine of the students increased their vocal performance ability when practicing and auditioning for the countywide honors festival. All of the nine students who auditioned vocally in three-part harmony were accepted to participate in the countywide honors musical festival concert in the spring. The students were excused from regular school classes for 4 days in order to attend music rehearsals at a local university in preparation for a public concert.

Acceptance into this festival is the highest musical honor one can attain at the elementary level in the county.

The honors music festival audition not only allowed the students the opportunity for a new musical experience, but also, the students' classmates, teachers, and parents exhibited a higher interest in the musically talented students' performances than was previously shown. This activity, even though it involved only nine students, seemed to be a school activity. It seemed to raise the level of enthusiasm for music throughout the entire school. The nine students performed their audition piece in classes throughout the school. Teachers and students who were not associated with the musically talented students often asked the writer how the audition music was coming along and asked questions about the honors music festival. When the results were known, the administrator insisted that the writer interrupt classes and make the announcement on the school's public address system. The support and encouragement the students received during the honors festival audition were never before exhibited to this extent as observed by the writer.

The third objective, "Each musically talented student will demonstrate a more positive attitude for the subject of music as measured by a pre and postattitude survey,"

was met for all but two of the questions the students responded to in the postattitude survey. Objective Three was measured by a teacher-made attitude survey (see (Appendix F). The survey was conducted at the beginning and end of the implementation period. The questions and responses to the survey appear in Appendix K.

The musically talented students exhibited a high degree of interest in music before the implementation of this project began. However, the writer felt that a class of this type would increase the students' interest to an even higher degree than was exhibited before the implementation of the class. As previously stated, the students' responses to the attitude survey did show a slight, but significant, increase to all except two of the questions.

On a rating scale from 1 to 5, the preimplementation response to the statement "I do not like having to do music worksheets or music notebooks" produced a mean score of 2.4, which revealed that the majority of the students either disagreed with the statement or were undecided. The post-implementation mean score of 1.7, an increase of .7, was convincing enough to believe that the students increased their enjoyment of doing music worksheets and notebooks in the talented class. The students tended to do a lot of written work in the class when writing musical

compositions and also when learning music theory.

The preimplementation response to the statement "We should spend more time playing musical instruments in class" produced a mean score of 4.3 and a postimplementation mean score of 3.8. This .5 drop for enthusiasm to play more instruments in class was understandable and was to be expected. The students in the talented class performed musical instruments for at least half of the class time during each week's class. The students also performed on the instruments of their choice, which was never permitted during a regular music class.

The postimplementation response to the statement "I like to play an instrument at home" increased from the pre-implementation response by a mean score of .4. The post-implementation score was one of the highest with a mean score of 4.1 which meant that most students agreed with the statement. Three of the students made instrument purchases during the course of the class. Two of the students bought a piano and one of the students bought a clarinet. One of the students who bought a piano also began to take private piano lessons, and the other student will begin taking piano lessons in the near future. The clarinet student is receiving clarinet lessons from the writer.

The highest postimplementation increase occurred with the statement "I watch musical shows on television". In the pre-implementation response, the students stated that they were undecided or disagreed with this statement. In the postimplementation response, the students stated that they agreed more with this statement. The writer is not aware of the type of musical shows the students watch on television. However, the increase of the students' instrumental performances and the honors festival concert audition may have increased their awareness of musical performances on television. The writer also played the classical music radio station during the beginning of each class session while students were coming into the classroom. This activity may also have increased their awareness of the performance of classical music.

The preimplementation mean score in response to the statement "I would like to have a musical instrument and be in the band in junior high school" was 4.2 which revealed that the students agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. However, in the postimplementation score, the mean dropped to 3.4 which stated that the students either were undecided or agreed with this statement. This was disturbing to the writer and there are basically two explanations for this decline in interest for a musical instrument in junior high school. First, the students,

after auditioning for the honors festival, felt secure with their voices and might wish to be in a vocal ensemble in junior high school. The other explanation is that the students were currently deciding their extra-curricular activities for junior high school during the time of the postimplementation survey. The students were being offered more activities than simply art or music, and they may have wished to try something new.

The preimplementation mean score to the statement "I do not want to take music in junior high school" was 2.0 which revealed that the students disagreed with this statement. The postimplementation score of this statement rose to 2.2 which leaned toward the undecided statement. It was not a significant increase to convince the writer that the students did not wish to take music in junior high school. However, it did appear that a few students were undecided on their activities for junior high school.

The writer was pleased to see an increase in the mean score of the statements "Playing an instrument or singing is a good way to spend spare time" and "I enjoy learning how music is put together. I like naming the notes on the staff and how many beats are in a measure". These two statements received the highest score in the postimplementation survey--4.3--which revealed that the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

These responses prove to the writer that the students enjoyed the musical composition, theory learning, and musical performance independently and in the talented class.

The students rated the musically talented class during the final class session with a teacher-made final evaluation form (see Appendix L). Eight of the 10 forms distributed were returned to the writer. The form cotained six narrative questions and a rating of the class activities. This form helped the writer examine the success of the class and the various methods the writer utilized during the class.

In response to the question, "Do you believe you have increased your music knowledge in the talented class?" all of the students responded positively. When responding to this question, the students mentioned the various concepts and music symbols which they had learned in music theory, singing in three-part harmony, and the instruments they had learned how to play more proficiently.

All of the students also responded positively to the question "Do you believe you have improved your musical performance in the talented class?" The student who recently began taking piano lessons stated, "I have been complimented by my piano teacher on how well I can already play the keyboard."

Six of the eight students who responded to the evaluation stated that the talented class had helped them with the decision as to whether or not they would take music in junior high school. One of the eight students stated that she always knew that she would take music in junior high school and the class did not help her make up her mind. Another one of the eight students stated, "No, but I like music and I might take an instrument or be in the chorus in eighth or ninth grade." One of the students who responded positively clearly stated, "Yes, this class made up my mind." The responses to this question do not explain the decrease in the students' lack of interest in choosing music as an activity in junior high school in the postimplementation attitude survey. However, the two students who did not return the evaluation form to the writer may have accounted for the negative response in the attitude survey.

When asked the question, "What did you enjoy the most about our talented class?" the responses varied. Three of the students mentioned the student projects; two students enjoyed the honors festival practice and audition; two students enjoyed everything; and one student enjoyed the performance aspect of the class. One student stated, "I enjoy not repeating the things I already know which is what I do when I come to music with my homeroom class."

Another student mentioned, "You can tell your own ideas, and it is different and more interesting than music class."

The writer received three basic responses from the question, "What did you enjoy the least about our talented class?" The number one response was "Nothing." One student mentioned "The fact that we have it only once a week." Musical composition was given as a response by one student because she felt it was too difficult.

Seven of the students did not mind staying after school for the class. The one student who did mind stated that she had a lot of homework to do and usually did it right after school. One student stated, "This is usually what I do in my spare time anyway."

The next part of the evaluation involved the students rating the seven activities they experienced in the talented class. The two activities which were equally enjoyed by the students were the opportunity to attend class with students who enjoy music and the honors' festival practice and audition. Both of these activities received an equal number of votes for number one on the activity list. The number two favorite activity was performing for other classes in the school, and the third choice was performing for classmates in the talented class. Individual student projects received the most

varied responses ranging from a one to a seven. The learning of music theory ranked six among the favored activities, and musical composition ranked six among the favored activities. The writer was surprised with the results of music theory learning and musical composition. However, they were the two most regimented activities of the class. More in-depth results of this evaluation will be discussed in the Conclusions section of this report.

The talented music class did prove to be a success as indicated by the increase in mean scores by all students on the music test, the increase in the quality of all of the students performance as exhibited by the students' checklists and success for nine of the students in the honors festival audition, the increase in the mean scores of the student attitude survey in all but two of the questions in the post-implementation survey, and by the positive responses received on the final evaluaton form.

Conclusions

The three objectives of this practicum were concerned with increasing students' musical knowledge, increasing students' performance skills, and increasing students' enthusiasm for music. These objectives were successfully met through the use of the following four solution

strategies: the pull-out music class, the learning of music theory, musical composition, and individual student projects.

The pull-out music class was rated as the number one activity enjoyed the most by the students in the final evaluation survey. The class allowed the students to meet with peers who also had musical talents and a love for music. Students attending this class had the opportunity to increase their musical knowledge to a level they would have never been able to accomplish in the regular elementary music class. The average music student would have not been capable of learning this material at this time. The class also allowed the students the freedom to work on various types of musical instruments, develop and present an individual project to the class, and write their own music which helped to make them more independent learners. Even though the class atmosphere was relaxed, students fulfilled the class requirements despite the fact that they did not receive formal grades for their classwork. Also, students did not have to raise their hands to be called upon, they simply spoke one at a time when they wished to make a statement or ask a question. The students seemed to enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the class and would occasionally make comments to the writer as to how much they liked the class compared to their

other classes. The review of the literture also mentioned how enjoyable the pull-out program was for talented students. Ely (1977), Wooddell (1984), Kress (1985), Taylor et al. (1985), Shrum (1985), Karnes and Peddicord (1980), and Kolloff and Feldhusen (1986) all stressed the importance of a pull-out program for talented individuals.

The learning of advanced music theory in the talented class was not discussed in the literature. However, the writer felt that the students needed to learn advanced theory in order to increase their performance skills and to write musical compositions. The learning of music theory was a regimented activity which closely resembled the learning environment of most classes. During each class period, the teacher taught a new music concept to the class and encouraged class participation to further investigate the concept. The students were then given an assignment in order to exhibit their understanding of the concept.

When the writer felt that the students understood a particular music concept, a piece of music incorporating the new music concept was assigned to the students for a future performance. The students rated performing for others as their second most enjoyed activity in the talented class. The students often performed for their peers and regular music classes.

The new concept also was assigned to the students for incorporation into their music compositions. The students seemed to enjoy the challenge of incorporating the new music concepts into actual performances and music writing. Their classroom music vocabulary also improved as a result of advanced theory learning.

However, in the final evaluation, the students rated the learning of music theory sixth out of a possible seven activities which they enjoyed the most. During the implementation of music theory learning, the students gave no indication that they did not enjoy this activity. As previously stated, this was a regimented activity and the students may have preferred the independent activities which were unlike a regular classroom environment.

Musical composition was the next activity chosen for this project. A review of the literature stressed the enjoyment students receive from composing music. Ely (1977) reported that students enjoy performing the melodies they compose. Skaught (1978) stated that music writing increased the knowledge and performance skills of musically talented students. The students' knowledge and performance skills did increase as a result of music composition. However, the students reported in the final evaluation that they enjoyed this activity least of all. Students reported that they did not feel comfortable

performing the songs they wrote. The writer discovered that several students became nervous to the point of tears during the performance of their compositions. One student stated that music composition was "too difficult" to do well.

Despite the fact that the students did not enjoy this activity as much as the writer anticipated they would, they did improve their music writing skills over the course of the 12-week period. Several of the students who were not secure with their compositions produced excellent compositions. It is the writer's belief that this activity may be an enjoyable one for students to do on their own. However, when students were asked to perform their compositions for others, they experienced a sense of insecurity and embarrassment.

The fourth solution, individual student projects, received a widespread rating by the students in the final evaluation. However, average student responses rated this activity third of the activities implemented in the class. Three of the eight students who presented projects did an outstanding job in researching and presenting the material to the class. They utilized real instruments, recordings, and distributed computerized information sheets to the class. They did not simply read paragraphs from the dictionary. Five of the students who presented projects

simply read copied paragraphs from the dictionary and asked questions of the class preceeding the report. Two students did not complete their projects and did not present a project to the class. The two students who did not present a project seemed insecure about themselves in front of others. The writer encouraged these two students but did not force them to present their projects.

The explanation for the variance in the student reports may be two-fold. The writer did not grade or evaluate the student projects which may have influenced the students' interest in the project. Also, the three students who went to the trouble to produce a quality report were the same three students who recently acquired musical instruments. They reported on their new instruments which was very motivating for them.

Despite the fact that not all of the reports were of the quality the writer had hoped for, the students were able to increase their knowledge in the following areas: the clarinet, the piano, Dixieland jazz, the Casio, and the composer Johannes Brahms.

By successfully achieving the first two objectives of this practicum project, increasing the knowledge and performance skills of the student, there is a worthwhile message which must be realized by the music teacher. The message is that there must be a pull-out class to educate

the students who are not being challenged in the regular music classroom. The goal of the class must be to provide challenging and interesting activities for the students to increase their musical knowledge and skills. The music teacher may have to convince the school administrator of the importance of the class and request that it be scheduled during the school day. If the school administrator agrees to the importance of the class but is unable to schedule it during the school day, the music teacher may meet with the students on an after school basis as was successfully accomplished in this practicum.

The third objective of this practicum, increasing students' attitudes toward music, was also successfully met and states a clear message to music teachers. Music teachers may often feel that talented students already have a high interest in music and there is really no need to increase their interest. However, they must realize that even the most talented music students may lose their interest in music if they are not challenged and allowed growth opportunities. Elementary students, especially in the sixth grade, are determining what their future interests will be in junior high school. If music teachers do not address the needs of musically talented students, their interest in music may become nonexistent.

In conclusion, this practicum project demonstrated

that it is possible to increase the music knowledge and performance skills of musically talented students through the implementation of a class designed for musically talented students. The writer is convinced that every school should provide this type of class for musically talented students. The writer will share this practicum with the school administrator in order to request that a musically talented class be scheduled during the school day. It is the writer's recommendation to all music teachers to develop a musically talented class within their school. This type of class may be the most important one in some students' lives. It will also help the students to realize that their talents are important enough to be addressed.

Recommendations

The writer has six recommendations to make to music teachers based on the findings of this practicum project.

1. The writer recommends a musically talented class be held for musically talented students in the school environment. This class ideally would be scheduled during the school day.

2. The activities in the musically talented class should be designed to meet the specific interests, talents, and personalities of the students.

3. Request that the class be scheduled during the school day. If the class was scheduled during the school day, the music teacher would be able to formally evaluate the students for a music grade for the class. If the class meets after school, the students may view it as an extracurricular activity. Consequently, the students may not view the class as seriously as they would if it was a daily scheduled class and the music teacher would not be able to formally grade the students if the class was held after school hours.

The writer recommends that the class meet at least two times per week to keep the students' motivation level high. Ideally, the class should meet on a daily basis to ensure the quality of the class. Fifth, the music teacher is advised to make the class an enjoyable experience for the students. Allow the class to be fun and not as regimented as a normal classroom environment. Finally, the music teacher should treat all students with respect and love and incorporate her enthusiasm for music into the class sessions.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum project were shared with two individuals who have a significant number of contacts with other educators. First, the writer shared

this practicum and its results with her school site administrator in hopes of incorporating this class into the music schedule for next year. The writer also encouraged the administrator to share the practicum results with her colleagues in hopes that other schools may incorporate a similar program.

Secondly, the writer shared the practicum project and its results with the county music coordinator. The writer encouraged the music coordinator to share the report with other music teachers throughout the county. The writer will be available to work with other music teachers who were interested in developing a musically talented class within their school environment.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW

1. What do you enjoy doing in music class?

2. What are you learning in music class?

3. Do you feel that you are capable of learning more than you are currently learning in music class? Why?

4. What is your opinion of the songs we play on the bells and recorder in music class? Are they simple or difficult for you?

5. Do you ever participate in music activities outside of the music classroom? (i.e. choir, private lessons)

6. What would you like to be learning in music class that you are not learning? Why?

7. Do you ever buy or borrow music books so that you may practice new songs on your recorder?

8. How do you feel when you are in music class?

9. Do you feel ahead of your classmates in music class?

APPENDIX B

MUSIC COORDINATOR LETTER

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOUTH CENTRAL AREA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE • 2201 SOUTHWEST 4th STREET • MIAMI, FLORIDA 33135

DR. JOSEPH A. FERNANDEZ
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

MRS. CAROL CORTES
AREA SUPERINTENDENT
(305) 642-7555

DADE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
MR. PAUL L. CEJAS, CHAIRMAN
DR. MICHAEL KROP, VICE-CHAIRMAN
MR. G. HOLMES BRADDOCK
DR. ROSA CASTRO FEINBERG
MS. JANET R. McALILEY
MR. ROBERT RENICK
MR. WILLIAM H. TURNER

November 12, 1987

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Are talented centers enough? I do not believe so.

As a music teacher at both the elementary and junior high school level, and as a music specialist/coordinator for the Dade County Public Schools, I have been observing students in music classrooms, in rehearsals, at practice, in performances, and other instructional settings for a number of years. It has been interesting to notice the various levels of interest and 'natural' ability that can be found in any group of music students.

Long before the days of talented centers, I was aware of 2-3 students in each class of (28-34) students who exhibited a superior innate musical sensitivity to music, who absorbed musical content rapidly, who performed music at a consistently high quality, who brought with them a extremely high level of interest and self motivation, and who had the persistence and independence to "practice till perfect."

I believe that each school should provide in-depth opportunities for all students who show these kinds of evidence of high achievement in their knowledge and skills of music and who are highly motivated to pursue music study.

I would like to see the day when every school with a student population of 300 students would; identify those 18-24 musically talented students and allocate sufficient qualified staff to provide in-depth music instruction "talented class" on a regular basis for those students above and beyond the instruction they receive in the regular music program.

A school of 600 students should have two classes to meet the needs of those students who exhibit exceptional musical sensitivity and interest. One talented unit should be provided for every population of 300 students in all schools.

The "Home School" talent classes would provide opportunities for students who do not have the advantage of private music lessons to build their music skills. All students in the "Home School" talent classes would have opportunities to be better prepared for a successful audition and placement in a "Talented Center", should they choose to do so.

Some talented students are denied the advantages of a "Talented Center" because parents are sometimes reluctant to send their children to a school outside of their neighborhood. The talents of these students could be provided for in the "Home School" talented class.

I believe there should be talented classes in every school as well as in a talented center.

Sincerely,

Charles Buckwalter
Music Coordinator
South Central Area

CB/rs

APPENDIX C

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Parents:

Enclosed is a survey which includes questions about your child in music class. I would like for you to answer the questions as honestly as possible. Please write any further comments you may have on the back of the survey. I am conducting this survey to the parents whose children exhibit above-average musical ability. Please have your child return the completed survey to me as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Elaine Meils
Music Instructor

Parent Survey

1. What is your child learning in music class?

2. Do you feel your child is capable of learning advanced music knowledge? Why?

3. Does your child buy music books to study at home?

4. Does your child practice musical instruments at home? If yes, what type of instrument(s)?

5. Does your child take private instrumental lessons?

6. Does your child exhibit a high degree of interest in music?

7. Does your child express an interest in continuing his/her musical training in junior high school?

APPENDIX D

PRE AND POSTTEST

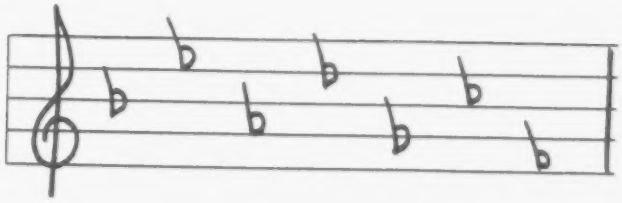
MUSIC TEST

80

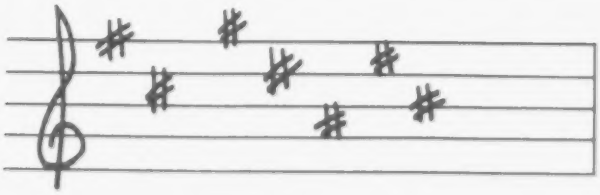
NAME _____ DATE _____

I. KEY SIGNATURES

1. Identify the following flats:



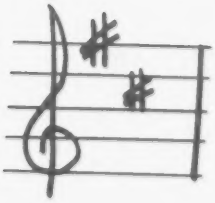
2. Identify the following sharps:



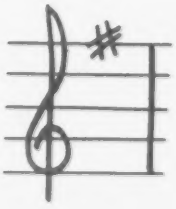
3. Identify the following keys:

Key of _____

Key of _____



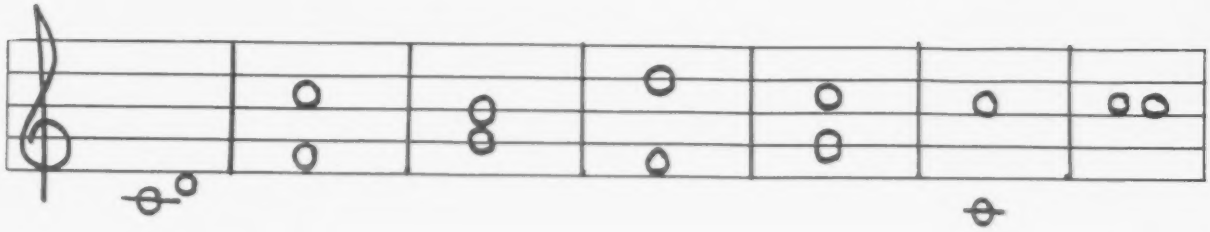
Key of _____



Key of _____

II. INTERVALS

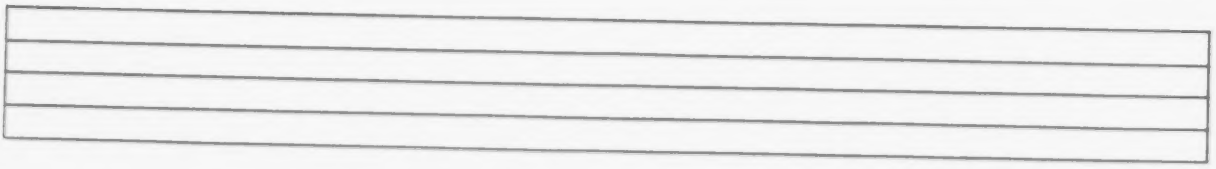
1. Identify the following intervals:

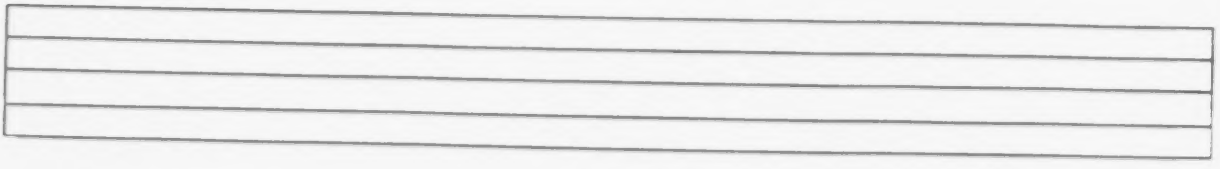


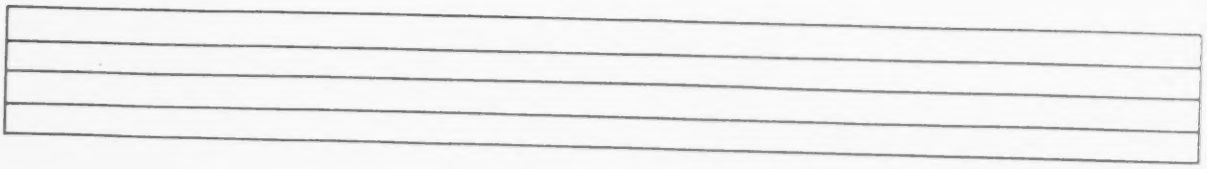
III. SCALES

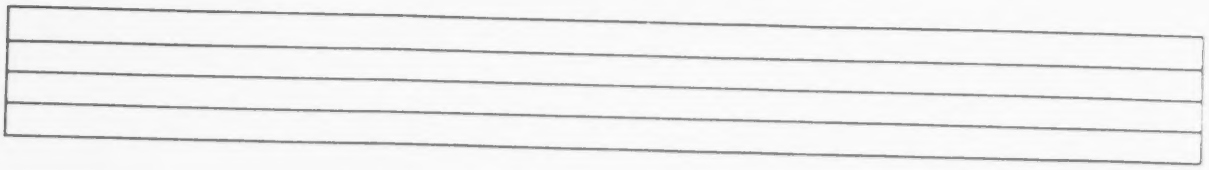
Write the following major scales on the staffs below (ascending and descending):

C, G, F, D, B♭



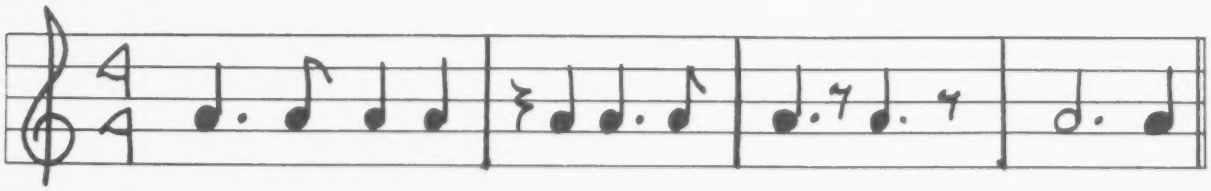






IV. DOTTED NOTES

Write the beats under each note and rest.



V. ACCIDENTALS

Write the letter name under each note in the following exercise:

VI. MUSIC VOCABULARY

Tempo

Dynamics

Crescendo

Forte

Piano

Fermata

Time Signature

Ritard

Accelerando

VII. COMPOSITION

Write a musical composition in $\frac{4}{4}$, 16 measures long, and in the key of F:

APPENDIX E

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CHECKLIST

NAME: _____

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:					
RHYTHM:					
DYNAMICS:					
PHRASING:					
TEMPO:					
OVERALL RATING:					

APPENDIX F

STUDENT ATTITUDE SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Circle your response for each of the following statements.

5 = I strongly agree
4 = I agree
3 = I am undecided
2 = I disagree
1 = I strongly disagree

5 4 3 2 1 (1) I enjoy learning how music is put together.

5 4 3 2 1 (2) I do not like having to do music sheets or music notebooks.

5 4 3 2 1 (3) We should spend more time playing musical instruments in class.

5 4 3 2 1 (4) I like to play an instrument at home.

5 4 3 2 1 (5) I watch musical shows on television.

5 4 3 2 1 (6) I would like to have a musical instrument and be in the band in junior high school.

5 4 3 2 1 (7) I do not want to take music in junior high school.

5 4 3 2 1 (8) I would like to take piano lessons.

5 4 3 2 1 (9) Playing an instrument or singing is a good way to spend spare time.

APPENDIX G

WEEKLY LOG

WEEK

TOPIC:

METHOD:

RESULTS OF METHOD:

STUDENT REACTION:

TEACHER CONCERNS:

SUGGESTIONS:

APPENDIX H

SUMMATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE CHECKLISTS

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #1

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:	✓				
RHYTHM:	✓				
DYNAMICS:	✓				
PHRASING:	✓				
TEMPO:	✓				
OVERALL RATING:	✓				

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #2

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:	✓				
DYNAMICS:	✓				
PHRASING:	✓				
TEMPO:	✓				
OVERALL RATING:	✓				

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #3

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:					
RHYTHM:					
DYNAMICS:					
PHRASING:					
TEMPO:					
OVERALL RATING:					

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #9

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:		✓			
DYNAMICS:	✓				
PHRASING:	✓				
TEMPO:	✓				
OVERALL RATING:	✓				

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student *5

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:		✓			
DYNAMICS:		✓			
PHRASING:		✓			
TEMPO:		✓			
OVERALL RATING:		✓			

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #6

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:		✓			
DYNAMICS:			✓		
PHRASING:		✓			
TEMPO:		✓			
OVERALL RATING:		✓			

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #7

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:		✓			
DYNAMICS:		✓			
PHRASING:		✓			
TEMPO:		✓			
OVERALL RATING:		✓			

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #8

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:	✓				
RHYTHM:	✓				
DYNAMICS:	✓				
PHRASING:	✓				
TEMPO:	✓				
OVERALL RATING:	✓				

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #9

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:		✓			
RHYTHM:		✓			
DYNAMICS:		✓			
PHRASING:		✓			
TEMPO:		✓			
OVERALL RATING:		✓			

FINAL CHECKLIST

NAME: Student #10

	OUTSTANDING	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR
NOTE ACCURACY:	✓				
RHYTHM:	✓				
DYNAMICS:	✓				
PHRASING:		✓			
TEMPO:	✓				
OVERALL RATING:	✓				

APPENDIX 1

SUMMATION OF THE WEEKLY LOGS

Month One

Concepts Introduced:

1. Scales of F, B, and G Major
2. Whole and half steps
3. Time signatures
4. Dotted rhythms

Methods Used:	Results of Method:
1. Student Composition	1. Students successfully completed a 16 measure composition incorporating the new concepts.
2. Student Performance	2. Students performed pieces of music which contained the new music concepts with great ease. They also performed their compositions for the class which made several students nervous.

Student Reaction:

The students seemed very enthusiastic in the class. They freely asked questions and seemed to be comfortable with one another. Several of the students seemed to be nervous when performing for the group.

Teacher Concerns:

The writer hoped that the students would continue to stay after school to learn advanced material. Hopefully more of the students would feel comfortable performing for the group in the future.

Month Two

Concepts Introduced:

1. Question and answer compositions
2. Music Vocabulary
   - -tempo
   - -dynamics
   - -forte, piano
   - -crescendo, decrescendo

Methods Used:	Results of Method:
1. Student Performance -in class -for other classes	1. Students enjoyed performing pieces of music for the group and other classes. All pieces of music contained the new concepts.
2. Student Composition	2. The question and answer compositions were difficult for the students to grasp because of the acute listening skills involved. Compositions were much improved from a musical context this month.
3. Student Projects	3. Students gained musical knowledge from a piano project and a Casio project.

Student Reaction:

Students continued to exhibit great interest in the class and attendance was never a problem. The students enjoyed the projects which were given. Composition performances did not seem to make students nervous.

Teacher Concerns:

Students brought such a wide variety of instruments to class and there was not enough time to devote to each student performing on a particular instrument.

Month Three

Concepts Introduced:

1. Music Intervals
2. Vocal singing in three-part harmony
3. Vocal sight-reading

Methods Used:	Results of Method:
1. Student Performance	1. Students successfully learned to sing in three-part harmony for the honors festival audition.
2. Student Projects	2. Students gained musical knowledge about the Casio, the piano, chamber music, the clarinet, and dixieland jazz.

Student Reaction:

The honors festival audition was very exciting for the students. The students continued to exhibit a high level of enthusiasm for the class and faithfully attended the class. Three of the students presented excellent projects.

Teacher Concerns:

The writer initially did not wish to spend as much time with the honors festival preparation. However, it was evident that the students were gaining knowledge from the honors festival audition music. The writer decided that future student projects will receive formal evaluations.

APPENDIX J

RESULTS OF STUDENT ATTITUDE SURVEY

Rating Scale for Pre and Post-Implementation Scores

5 = I strongly agree
4 = I agree
3 = I am undecided
2 = I disagree
1 = I strongly disagree

1. I enjoy learning how music is put together, like the names of notes on the staff and how many beats in a measure.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
4.0	4.3

2. I do not like having to do music worksheets or music notebooks.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
2.4	1.7

3. We should spend more time playing musical instruments in class.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
4.3	3.8

4. I like to play an instrument at home.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
3.7	4.1

5. I watch musical shows on television.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
2.4	3.2

6. I would like to have a musical instrument and be in the band in junior high school.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
4.2	3.4

7. I do not want to take music in junior high school.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
2.0	2.7

8. I would like to take piano lessons.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
2.7	2.7

9. Playing an instrument or singing is a good way to spend spare time.

Pre-Implementation	Post-Implementation
3.7	4.3

APPENDIX K

STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

Monthly Evaluation Form

1. What new musical concepts have you learned this month?

2. Rate your instrumental performance this month.
   Outstanding
   Excellent
   Good
   Average

3. What do you need to improve with your instrumental performance?

4. Name the musical skills you have mastered this month.

5. Name the musical skills you still need to improve. How do you plan to improve the skills?

6. Do you enjoy attending the talented class? Why?

7. What have you enjoyed learning in the class?

8. What have you disliked about the class?

9. Additional Comments you would like to make:

APPENDIX L

FINAL EVALUATION FORM

Final Evaluation Form

Please answer the following questions. Please include an explanation after each one of your answers.

1. Do you believe you have increased your music knowledge in the talented class?

2. Do you believe you have improved your musical performance in the talented class?

3. Has the talented class helped you with the decision as to whether or not to take music in junior high school?

4. What did you enjoy the most about the talented class?

5. What did you enjoy the least about the talented class?

6. Did you mind staying after school to participate in the talented class?

Rate the activities (1-7) in the order which you enjoyed the most. (#1-the best, #7-the least)

1. Music theory learning
2. Student composition
3. Student performance in class
4. Student performance for other classes in the school
5. Student reports
6. Honors festival practice and audition
7. Attending a class with students who enjoy music as much as you do

Please explain why you chose your #1 choice and your #7 choice.